

Winning Hearts and Minds Lessons from Jammu and Kashmir

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Winning Hearts and Minds

Lessons from Jammu and Kashmir

The constant threat of low-intensity proxy war and terrorism has become a disturbing feature of national life. This constitutes the new face of war.

— Dr APJ Abdul Kalam,
Former President of India

Introduction

In May 2008, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was an island of peace and prosperity. Summer was in the offing and the tourist inflow was expected to be higher than the previous years. The Dal lakeside was reverberating with life. The Santosh Trophy was held in the Valley and caught the enthusiasm of young girls indulging in football in the idyllic surroundings. Yet, a few months later, there appeared to be a sudden mood of despondency with waves of agitation spreading across the entire state (minus Ladakh). This has been ascribed to a series of events related to the transfer of land to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board. A spiral of mass agitations broke out in the Valley, leading to the cancellation of the land allotment by the state government. This, in turn, led to a mass agitation by Sri Amarnath Sangharsh Samiti (SASS) in the Jammu region. The consequence was a regional schism with allegations of economic blockade, demand for a march to Muzaffarabad, secessionist sloganeering and anti-national protestations.

In November 2008, the mood changed once again. Elections were held for the state assembly. Contrary to popular imagination, there was a groundswell of support for political activity. The separatists had given a boycott call in the Valley, and yet people came out and voted in large numbers. Polling in rural pockets of separatist influence such as Bandipore remained as high as 60 percent, while it was only in the core urban areas such as downtown

Srinagar, Anantnag and Sopore townships that there was some resistance. January 2009 saw a National Conference-Congress coalition government in power, led by a young Omar Abdullah, the third generation from the Abdullah family to occupy the office of the chief minister. This positive mood led Sajjad Lone, a moderate separatist, to opt for elections to the Lok Sabha in May 2009.

It seems that the wheel had turned a full circle within one year from despair to hope. The underlying theme is that the change brought about by a drop in militancy was much more lasting than was perceived by the periphery of protests that had rocked the Valley and the Jammu region for a year or so with varying intensity. The Indian Army's long and resolute battle against militancy had succeeded in achieving a degree of normalcy that can now facilitate the return of peace to the state after two decades of violence. Central to the strategy of countering militancy and proxy war in J&K has been the campaign to "win hearts and minds" or WHAM. A review of WHAM to draw the core lessons in the light of the turnaround in public mood as well as the wild swings seen in 2008 is, therefore, felt necessary.

Understanding Kashmir

Kashmir is caught in the paradox of history. A rich and cultural heritage with abundance of natural scenery, the picturesque beauty of the Valley and the charm of the people has been held hostage to a travesty of social and political strife over the years. Since Independence, Kashmir has been a symbol of Indian secularism and pluralism. There is, thus, a special bond between the people of Kashmir and the rest of the country, which has led to a considerable investment in the state in terms of human, material, economic and social capital over the years. This relationship is not synthetic as some would like to portray, but one of genuine affiliation, resulting in positive measures such as a higher level of human development index; return of near normalcy after almost two decades of strife, the return of estranged Kashmiri Pandits, smooth state elections in November-December 2008 and the willingness of the separatists to join the electoral process.

The undivided state of J&K was a melting pot of religions and cultures with Buddhist Ladakh, Shia Kargil and the Northern Areas, Sunni Kashmir and a Hindu Jammu having an intra as well as inter-religious mix, representing its

plural and inclusive heritage. But, with fundamentalism being the predominant strain of our times, the presence of a number of different religions within a geographical and political entity such as the state, has the potential of creating a divide amongst communities. The most significant impact of the same has been in Kashmir, where an attempt to replace Sufi Islam by fundamentalist Deobandi ideology, with extremist practices alien to Kashmiri culture, is being made through the barrel of a gun. Noted Islamic scholar Yogender Sikand highlights the opposition of groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiyyeba (LeT) to Kashmiri nationalism or *Kashmiriyat* on the plea that nationalism is unIslamic.¹ These groups are also attempting to destroy old cultural linkages of the people to Sufi traditions. Thus, “this opposition to Kashmiri nationalism by strict Islamist literalists has gone hand-in-hand with fierce denunciations of a range of local customary practices, many of these associated with popular Kashmiri Sufi traditions.”²

Kashmir has also been placed at the crossroads of identity. Religious affinity with Islam may draw it towards Pakistan, but this is only a superficial difference, for the forms of its practice have led to a schism in this natural affiliation. This explains the lack of ready acceptance of secession from India and a merger with Pakistan in Kashmir, except for a small group led by the non-moderate group of the Hurriyat Conference. This is being actively supported by the militant leadership of the United Jihad Council based in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). On the other hand, Mirwaiz Farooq seeks a pan-Kashmiri identity, while pro-nationalist leaders such as the Abdullahs are seeking a merger with the Indian character. There are also groups which intermittently vacillate between these positions.

In Kashmir, this dissonance with identity has also been exploited subtly for mobilisation of the masses. This is not uncommon in insurgencies, and distinction of language or national origin is routinely employed for this purpose.³ Emphasising on a national concomitant with a regional or state identity by integrating people geographically, economically and culturally will lead to social bonds enhancing linkages and overcome the bane of exclusivist perception. Modern nation-states have adequate space for accommodation of national as well as local identities; these principles have also been enshrined in the Indian Constitution with special provisions for Kashmir to preserve its uniqueness. The process of cooptation would, however, take some time,

spreading over decades rather than months or even years. It is evident that in Kashmir, this is ongoing rather than complete.

Religion is a major emotional issue with people in general, and is not peculiar to Kashmir. The experience of exploitation of religion in the past has not been very savoury in Kashmir. Whether it was the Hazratbal incident in 1964 and 1993, or the Charar-e-Sharief in 1995, religion has always been an inflection point for raising the ante of agitations and militancy.⁴ Amarnath was another such tip for a new phase of “coerced civil agitation”. This experience was preceded by opposition to the improvement of Sufi shrines through Operation Sadbhavna. Exploitation of this issue by the extremists was also evident. The involvement of state authorities in religious trusts and autonomous bodies, thus, needs some consideration. Religion, including the management of shrines, is best left to religious leaders as per the needs of civil society.

The extremely sensitive nature of the information space in Kashmir is also evident with controversy over an advertisement of the Cadbury chocolate, “Temptation”. The advertising line showed a map of Kashmir that said, “I’m good, I’m tempting. I’m too good to share.” While the content may or may not have had the intent of a political message, it was deemed so by those who arbitrated opinion for the masses, and thus, the advertisement had to be hastily withdrawn.⁵

Coming to the demand for autonomy or its extreme alternative, *azadi*, as per Sumantra Bose, *azadi* or *kudmukhtari* (self-rule) has a long history in Kashmir dating back to the National Conference of the 1940s and cannot be expurgated, though it could be gradually eroded.⁶ Elections are generally seen as an empowering tool for self-rule. There are differing perceptions of this axiom in Kashmir. Why are Kashmiri people voting year after year if they are feeling alienated? The percentage of voting, apart from a few hard-line pockets, is generally over 40 percent, which is a good indicator of the people’s support for elections.⁷ In the 2008 elections, this exceeded all expectations and crossed 60 percent. Hopes of a better future, a new dialogue with freshly elected leaders and new parties or the proverbial anti-incumbency may probably be some of the reasons for which the people in Kashmir have been voting.

What is more important is that a large number of people participate not just in voting, but also in the election process, by being willing candidates

(despite the threat by militant groups), and by holding election meetings and rallies which are attended by a reasonable number of personnel. In 2008, in the militant hotbed of Sopore, 28 candidates are reported to have participated for one seat. Thus, there are grounds to believe that holding regular elections would meet the aspirations of the Kashmiri people for equal civil rights as in other parts of the country and act as a channel for airing grievances by electing public representatives to meet their aspirations.

Political and electoral legitimacy of the government remains a key issue in Kashmir. The state administration over the years, though led mostly by chief ministers from the Valley, has at times lacked legitimacy due to the perception of rigged elections and imposition of leadership from Delhi. The situation was particularly critical in the 1980s and got worse in the 1987 elections, which are now considered by most as being unfair and being the principal cause of triggering mass resentment.⁸

While the state has been administered by successive elected governments with interregnum of rule by the governor, the leadership has been exclusively from Kashmir, starting from Sheikh Abdullah. He was followed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, G M Sadiq, Syed Mir Qasim, Farooq Abdullah, G M Shah, followed by Farooq Abdullah again, Mufti Mohammad Sayyed, Ghulam Nabi Azad and now Omar Abdullah. Ghulam Nabi Azad has been the only exception, hailing from Doda region in Jammu. No doubt, many of these leaders are seen by Kashmiris as fostered from outside the state, but this is peculiar to democracy in India, where chief ministers, be they of the Indian National Congress (INC) or the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and others, are nominated by the Party High Command from Delhi, rather than through a process of selection by the elected members of the legislative assembly. However, in states like Kashmir, where people's perception is important, allowing the members of the state legislature of the party seeking power to elect their own leader as the chief minister may create positive perceptions.

Finally, there is a certain level of intransigence in the three parties – India, Pakistan and Kashmir – to the Kashmir issue. Sumantra Bose has called this phenomenon, “The unbending belief in the absolute legitimacy of one of the three nationalists’ (in the case of the Kashmir independenceists, perhaps more accurately quasi-nationalists) perspectives and rejection of competing perspectives as utterly illegitimate.”⁹

To draw conclusions from the above review, it would be seen that socio-religious fault lines are impermanent, and thus, can be effectively addressed to turn the clock back to moderation. In doing so, it should be appreciated that the sentiment of separatism is fairly deep-rooted and has to be addressed holistically. The strategy should thus be to reach out to the Kashmiri people as much as seeking their participation in activities of the Indian state. This should form one of the main themes of the continued WHAM campaign.

In examining the debate on hearts and minds, the first consideration would be to identify what is it that the Kashmiris want. The yearning of the people of Kashmir has been expressed in various forums. Surveys have been conducted from time-to-time to provide a glimpse into the Kashmiri mindset. Perceptive observers such as Sumantra Bose denote restoration of civil rights, a lasting peace process involving all parties and sections of political opinion in India, Kashmir and Pakistan and providing a genuine voice for dissent as the three basic aspirations of the Kashmiri people.¹⁰ Addressing these three demands would, therefore, be important.

Religion is an extremely sensitive issue, best left to be addressed by clerics. Taking religious leaders on board a WHAM campaign is, however, necessary, and will have to be done subtly. Involvement of the armed forces in this aspect needs much deliberation, for this may lead to resentment, as has happened with the army's attempts to renovate Sufi shrines in the Valley.¹¹

The responsibility for administration of J&K is jointly of the state and the centre. An elected government in the state, as has been generally the case except for periods such as from 1990-1996, is mostly representative of the people. While state leaders who have been chief ministers could not make all the people happy all the time, they were certainly better than the separatist leaders, who with their agitationist attitude, have only brought grief to the people. These are primarily puppets of Islamabad, living in considerable luxury eulogising their mentors, even as the people whose cause they espouse suffer the heat and dust of agitations. This political truth needs to be brought to the notice of the masses in Kashmir.

Many nationalist Kashmiri leaders claim from time-to-time to have put their lives in danger whereas the separatists enjoy security from the

government as well as tacit protection of militants who vow not to physically attack them. Surprisingly, through their rabid propaganda, it is the separatists who seem to be winning the campaign of hearts and minds, because this aspect has not been sufficiently explained to the people.

Elections have always denoted a positive trend in recent times. The process started with elections in 1996, but full credibility was established in 2002 and 2008 which has largely erased memories of rigged elections of March 1987.¹² Elections would provide a powerful platform for managing hearts and minds campaign in the Valley, if the cycle is regularly sustained. Given these factors, a survey of the configuration of militancy in Kashmir is necessary.

Understanding Militancy in Kashmir

Militancy, on a low level, manifests itself through the rise of unfulfilled aspirations of the people vented in the form of agitations, and on a higher level, through terrorism. Protests are mainly due to failure of the administration to deliver socio-political palliatives to meet the hopes of the people. The Kashmiri people have had a series of grievances – real, imaginary or manipulated – which has led to loss of faith in the government over the years, leading to militancy. The government has made amends through positive discrimination, which is being perceived by people of other regions of the state, namely Jammu and Ladakh, as being inequitable. On the other hand, an external state, Pakistan, has effectively used this dissent to its advantage.

There are many interpretations of the conflict in Kashmir as terrorism, insurgency, militancy or proxy war. Of this, 'proxy war' would be the most appropriate definition. Proxy war entails involvement of a third party and is a major variation from a spontaneous militancy.¹³ Implementing WHAM is far easier in militancy than a proxy war. For in the latter, the power and resources available to the third party state – Pakistan – is effectively employed not just to fan militancy but also to counter WHAM employed by India's forces.

The second aspect of fighting proxy war in Kashmir is the application of the Foco and Detonator theory consistently by Pakistan. The Foco theory was most successfully espoused by Fidel Castro and his mentor Che Guevara in Central America. In the context of Kashmir, Julian Schofield calls

it “Tribal Focoism”, where Pakistan has consistently relied on the Pashtuns as “imported itinerant insurgents” for raids since 1947.¹⁴ In Kashmir, volunteers and armed bands have been time and again used by Pakistan for its designs in the state.¹⁵ The most significant use of Focoism in the current context is the use of “demonstrative acts” to mobilise the population for civic agitation related to the Amarnath land issue.¹⁶ The next phase of Focoism to keep the militancy alive may be in the offing with infiltration by well trained and equipped militants reported in March 2009. It is evident that as the embers of dissatisfaction die down in Kashmir, the efforts by Pakistan to fan them would be increasingly more violent.

Pakistan’s effective use of Foco strategy is also obvious with the successive shift in support to militant groups operating in Kashmir. While in the initial stages, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was the primary arm of this strategy, it went on to raise the Hizbul Mujahideen comprising militants from J&K, and later depended on Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and LeT, along with others, such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) comprising primarily terrorists from Pakistan to sustain the militancy. At each stage, when a particular group was not found serving the purpose of the masters, another was inducted to ensure that overall thrust of the insurgency remained Pakistan-focussed.

The Detonator theory, on the other hand, postulates that nascent and potentially emotive causes should be exploited at the right moment, under appropriate circumstances. Ironically, this factor has thus far received insufficient attention in the counter-militancy deliberations.

Modern insurgencies function as social networks. Peer factors play an important role and a study of a network map is important to see how militancy operates. With modern technology, such networks can have very complex linkages, which are facilitated with ease, representing the “transdimensional and transnational nature” of insurgencies as per Hammes. Studying human links in terms of charisma and will is also considered significant. This will reveal the connections of militancy and proxy war to government sources, agents and others essential for planning a WHAM campaign.¹⁷ There is support for social network approach from other writers like Brian Reed, who indicate that network analysis provides a new way of thinking.¹⁸ This paradigm seems to offer a way of resolution that can be studied through social patterns connecting each member.¹⁹

Terrorists and their supporters in Kashmir operate in small groups dispersed across the state, and communicate and coordinate actions through diverse sources such as radio programmes, text-messaging, chain e-mails and so on. They do not need a central headquarter or a leadership base and have a flexible organisation like classic networks.²⁰ They rely on social association for survival. Thus, counter-insurgency operations also have to operate as counter-networks, and WHAM would best work by addressing these. Each network needs to be studied in detail to establish interlocking grids based on common ideology, ethnicity and so on.

The reasons for youth in Kashmir joining militancy are manifold. A survey published by General Arjun Ray during the peak of militancy in the mid 1990s indicate that 44.5 percent of the youth joined due to coercion, while 45.5 percent due to a deep feeling of hurt and alienation as well as economic deprivation.²¹ While appropriate data is not available at present, a survey of the youth taking part in the agitation against the Amarnath land transfer indicates that a number of them continue to feel alienated, despite reduction in overall level of poverty in the state.

Economic growth is seen to benefit few and there is a large body of youth who are deprived of jobs. They can be easily mobilised for agitation in the state. Equitable growth across different societal layers is a constitutional mandate; its translation to the grass roots has not taken place across the board in J&K. Here again, remedial action will take some time, but clearly, there are parallels across the country and the situation need not be seen as being peculiar to Kashmir. Perception-building to avoid a feeling of exclusivist discrimination unique to the state is, thus, essential.

Understanding 'WHAM'

Winning hearts and minds, as a primary principle of counter-insurgency (CI), is rooted in the history of modern militancy. It formed a key component of the Templar model, followed by the British in Malaya in the 1950s, and in the final decades of the 20th century in the Northern Ireland. This is also the primary principle of the contemporary US and British model of counter-insurgency and has been extensively debated in the West.²² Yet the pay-offs are not evident, particularly in Afghanistan, due to collateral loss of civilian lives from air attack and helicopter strikes. WHAM remains

the primary component of CI for the armed forces in India, now engaged in varied geographic and ethno-cultural spectrums, from the Northeast to Kashmir.

While a standard definition for WHAM has so far not been evolved in India, according to Nathan Lweiter and Charles Wolf, WHAM has to lay “emphasis on popular support based on inherent ‘ardour and preferences’, stress on internal grievances over external influence, emphasis on economic deprivation and inequality; and on conception of insurgent conflict in terms of ‘electoral analogy’ where the outcomes are driven by and reflect the prevailing affiliations of majorities or substantial minorities.”²³ At the personal level, the hearts and minds campaign concerns security, honour and dignity of individual, family and society. At the societal level, a threat to culture, traditions, religion and identity would also lead to hostility in the masses. Once the personal and societal levels are combined, there is a general feeling of alienation of the people in areas affected by militancy.²⁴

WHAM can thus be described simply as a people-oriented process for establishing human, social and political linkages in Kashmir for the common good, contributing to building the concept of nationhood. While activists may have objections to linking human good to nationalism, lack of an alternate paradigm which can benefit a large number of members of society denotes the nation state as a benchmark for the purpose. This view is supported by Professor Ali A Jalali, who talks of structural legitimacy and rational legal authority, both espoused as components of a state by Max Weber, as being central to winning hearts and minds.²⁵

WHAM, in a proxy war scenario, has two dimensions, as it involves an external state as well as the indigenous people. This is, therefore, a tripartite relationship where more than one party is attempting to win over the people. Juxtaposing the love-hate triangle may be a pithy argument, but could appropriately explain why, despite deploying extensive resources, Pakistan has not succeeded in its endeavour and public opinion continues to tilt in favour of India. The Indian model of development and empowerment of the people of Kashmir has achieved better results. Thus, in an opinion poll by Peace Polls, from March to May 2008, 71 percent of Muslims in the state said they do not want to join Pakistan as opposed to only 49 percent

who do not want to join India.²⁶ However, this explains only one side of the argument. A proportion of the population continues to see separatism or *azadi* as a third option and not an either/or one between India and Pakistan. The main challenge for WHAM is winning over this segment of the populace.

The WHAM campaign is not an episodic response, but a long drawn-out, sustained strategy. It cannot effect change desired by external or internal elites, which is contrary to the sentiment of the people, in a short period of time. The flow of perception should thus attempt to gradually affect small changes, which will transform the mood in a sustained manner. The path and results attained will be frequently uncertain, yet if basic precepts are based on cardinal principles of human values and logical reasoning, and followed up by actions on the ground, people would eventually change their attitude and be willing to compromise with authority and even opt for sub-optimal solutions in the hope of better political choices in the days ahead. The challenge is to ensure that there is a steady positive trajectory of transformation. These factors seem to be working in Kashmir and need to be taken to a positive conclusion.

Population analysis is a primary requirement for planning WHAM. This would include a detailed analysis of the political, social and economic information to identify the needs of the people. The Americans call it “human terrain mapping” and have even involved people from diverse fields such as sociology and anthropology in the exercise.²⁷ The importance of population analysis would be evident with its applicability at all levels, from the tactical to the strategic, though under varied formats.

WHAM, however, is not a concept to gain intelligence. While intelligence may come as a spin-off, it cannot be a reason for WHAM and preferably, intelligence operatives should be far removed from such actions for fear of causing a negative impact. WHAM is also not an opportunity for gaining popularity, nor a photo occasion for personal publicity, but an attempt to establish the genuine concern of the government and the security forces for the people.

WHAM has to address internal grievances. In a democracy, this is always a difficult decision, particularly for the ruling leadership, as this would be an admission of failure and, thus, politically disastrous. External location of

internal grievance is, thus, a major strategy of most political parties. While emphasising the role of external players is important as a tool to bring in international pressure, the population will be more influenced if their internal grievances are addressed with alacrity and that should be the focus of the WHAM campaign.

Conventional wisdom thus concludes that improved governance, delivery of services and development are the key areas of a hearts and minds campaign. Given that the primary grievance of the people in Kashmir, at one time, was underdevelopment, civic action rightly formed a key focus of transformation through establishment of goodwill schools, projects such as tube wells, computer and vocational training centres and so on.

There is a need to review the impact of these actions on the larger objective of WHAM, of creating allegiance to the nation-state by developing a national ethos and identity. Academics such as Michael Fitzsimmons have questioned the validity of basing WHAM on civic action programmes. Fitzsimmons argues that where ethnic and religious identities are salient, who governs is as important as how governance is administered. People may accept poor governance by one of their own rather than efficient administration by those considered as outsiders.²⁸ At the state level, governance is principally by leaders from within the community, thus supporting the earlier premise of electoral rather than administrative governance of the state as far as possible.

However, the problem of delivery at the local level is acute due to factors such as inefficiency, corruption and poor management. A successful and effective model for grassroots delivery is a national predicament, not restricted to Kashmir. But, here again, there is a need to review the model for administering development through local leaders and gram panchayats. A pertinent question is—will this lead to loyalty of the people to the state or fragment it further to that of local leaders? The impact of nationalism could be spread over a wide band by applying governance through the local model and removing the role of arbitrators. By having a group of loyal community leaders, the message of nationalism will be communicated more effectively than by directly administering civic action, however good the intention may be.

Countering WHAM is part of the overall strategy of proxy war. The focus is on strategic communication with the masses by coercive manipulation of principal role players to its advantage. Generation of false statistics, creation of persecution, fictitious accounts of killing of Muslims or destruction of mosques by linking people's emotions with actions of security forces, which may or may not be true, are standard tactics. For instance, by spreading false news of an attack by security forces on a mosque, a large crowd can be mustered to march towards government offices. Elements within the crowd earmarked previously indulge in slogan shouting, stone throwing and badgering the security forces, thereby provoking a reaction. In case, there is any loss of life or injury in this firing, the spiral of agitations is set into motion, thereby serving the purpose of the counter-WHAM operatives.

Pakistan and its cohorts have been waging a successful counter-WHAM campaign, which has an operational and media dimension. Control of vernacular media under duress is one approach. Coercion and intimidation is always a favourite weapon for countering WHAM and instigating the local leadership. This is instructive in the Amarnath case. On 21 August, in a wiretap operation, the police exposed Tehreek-e-Hurriyat leader Masrat Alam Bhat complaining to the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) Chief Syed Salahuddin based in Pakistan of non-cooperation of the moderates led by Maulvi Mirwaiz Farooq referred to as "Baccha Maulvi" and the JKLF chief Yasin Malik referred to as "Gandhi" for spoiling the agitation.²⁹

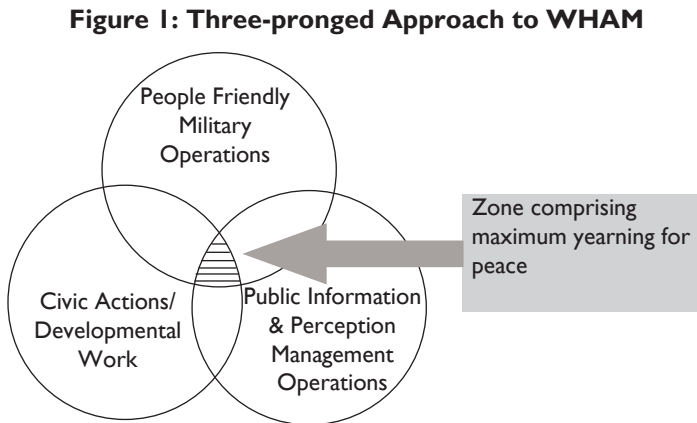
At the tactical level, the instruments used to trigger a reaction from security forces (by firing or grenade lobbying) are employed in crowded areas and public places. With an expectation of civilian casualties, it is anticipated that violation of human rights can then be exploited. Blurring spontaneous agitations with engineered ones is another tactic which is adopted by these operators. There are no means by which the normal public can determine whether a bandh is sponsored, coerced or spontaneous. Peer pressure leads to support to such calls as it is easier to follow an agitation, however depraved its cause might be, than to oppose a crowd. In one sweep, the good work done for the restoration of rights to the people by eliminating the fear of militancy can be undone by such acts of propaganda.

A Review of Application of WHAM

As the army has a well-developed concept and strategy for WHAM, a review of application could commence with an overview of perceptions and efforts by it in Kashmir. The overall concept of the Indian Army, which is the principal arm of the state involved in high-intensity counter-militancy operations in Kashmir, is based on WHAM. Thus, the Indian Army doctrine published by the Army Training Command (ARTRAC) speaks of “Winning the Hearts and Minds of the population through low profile and people-friendly operations (as) the most essential aspect of successful CI operations. In many a ways, they contribute even more than the actual operations.”³⁰ WHAM is described in the doctrine as a process of seeking the consent of the population for armed forces presence by accepting its necessity due to disturbed conditions in the area. It is seen as an action to strengthen friendly forces and win over uncommitted elements in society. The main strategy for implementing WHAM is civic action through development projects, which would improve the quality of life of the people and promote better understanding amongst the locals. Safeguarding human rights and minimising general inconvenience are the other arms of this strategy.³¹

Civic actions have been further divided into active and passive facets to “help create a conducive environment, generate a healthy image for the army and resultantly a groundswell for peace.” Civic actions are designed to shift focus on “helping people to help themselves”. While these are considered as active actions, passive actions to portray WHAM are indicated as “respect to elders and women, respect for local customs and traditions, good behaviour of troops, minimum population control measures, in consultation with state administration.”³²

The sub-conventional operations doctrine of the army has also emphasised the importance of WHAM, calling it as “paramount to the success of sub-conventional operations”. A detailed consideration of WHAM has been given in Chapter 5 of the doctrine, which calls for supplementing military operations with developmental activity. A three-pronged approach to winning hearts and minds comprises people-friendly operations, civic action and development and perception management, as per Figure 1.³³



While the population is deemed as the centre of gravity of all operations in militancy-affected areas, operationalisation of this concept is important. The army, as well as sub-conventional operations doctrine, rightly contend that the focus of operations will be the people. This centre of gravity has to be translated by actions on the ground through suitable roles and tasks for formations and units. The role of Kilo Force deployed in the Kashmir Valley for CI operations, as indicated by General Bammi in *War Against Insurgency and Terrorism in Kashmir*, is to “assist in restoring normalcy in the area of operations which enables unimpeded functioning of democratic institutions of the state.”³⁴ The emphasis here is on “institutions of the state”. A people-centric role could perhaps read “assist in restoring normalcy in the area of operations to facilitate people to carry out their day-to-day functioning without fear” or words to that effect. The counter-terrorist (CT) philosophy of V Force includes operational focus, synergy, security, national assets, and military civic operations. Should this also include providing succour to the “people”? For HQ 16 Corps in Jammu region, where the intensity is decidedly lesser than the Valley, its primary role is to “conduct sustained operations for eliminating maximum terrorists.”³⁵ There is, thus, a need for connecting the role with “people”.

The three-point concept developed by the army is appropriate for the role and tasks being performed by it. But WHAM goes far beyond people-friendly operations, civic actions or managing perceptions. It involves the entire process of governance—political, economic, and social, sports or

trade. This would have to take into account the factor of alienation and degree to which it impacts society. Thus, each measure including operations will have to factor in possible responses based on emotions, sentiments, intellectual logic and temperament of the population. It would also have to consider how the action will be viewed by militant commanders managing the counter WHAM campaign and the spin that would be given to seemingly pro-public measures undertaken by the government. The Amarnath agitation is a classic case of how a win-win situation had been turned into a lose-lose one for both the people of the Valley and Jammu and the government due to lack of appreciation of this essential factor.

While there is an understanding of the need for WHAM as a central part of the counter-militancy battle, there is a need for holistic perception of the concept. In most cases, WHAM is seen to have generated goodwill for the army, especially units, which are administering civic action. This is certainly a desired aim given that it eases conduct of operations. Yet people have not veered towards an inclusive nation-state. This may be considered as a structural problem or an inherent deficiency in the concept of civic action programmes as a tool for WHAM.

In the complex socio-political environment of Kashmir, vitiated by the indulgence of Pakistan, purely civic actions would hardly suffice to generate a positive wave of support for the government. There is a need for integrating the three facets of WHAM by the army, by elaborating on perception management and people-friendly operations, and integrate the same with civic action to effectively manifest WHAM.

Does it imply that each measure being implemented requires public approval? There is normally a gap between what elites perceive as good for the people and what is accepted by the masses, as it involves a process of change, and thus, instability. Therefore, building public opinion before implementing projects, which are liable to be misrepresented through manipulation is essential. Sufficient care has to be taken to ensure holistic consideration of all facets of the issue before taking presumptuous measures, particularly in a proxy war situation as in Kashmir. Lack of contact of the leadership with the masses due to security and administrative preoccupations or even lack of empathy has added a premium to holistic consideration. Some filters which could be used as templates are issues relating to religion, identity,

community and creed amongst many others. The Hurriyat Conference in Kashmir suffered from this deficiency of lack of contact with the people, where its leaders cocooned themselves from all shades of opinion and lost touch with the ground reality, continuing to sponsor issues such as election boycotts when the people viewed normal life more important than a separate political identity.

It is, therefore, evident that WHAM is a process and strategy to be adopted at the national level and cannot be left to the security forces alone. In this context, the strategy of the government highlighted by Gen Bammi indicates four elements, only one of which has direct people content – “redress public grievance” – as a part of the economic development paradigm.³⁶ While the security forces operate at the cutting edge of counter-militancy, they employ WHAM for their own survival and support. The army in particular, with its long exposure in counter-insurgency, superior capacity of organisations and autonomous command structure has been able to do considerable work towards WHAM through Operation Sadbhavna. However, this remains unstructured and unsupported by other authorities of the state, regionally and nationally. WHAM has a strong political and economic content over which the army has no control. This has to be addressed by the state and central government and civil society institutions.

A review of the hearts and minds drive in Kashmir reveals the need for enlarging the concept from implementation by security forces alone, to a state or national level effort involving all agencies. At the operational level, integrating the three prongs of civic action, people-centric operations and communication has to be effective. This is a long drawn-out process, and thus, the campaign for hearts and minds in Kashmir will have to continue even after regular violence is reduced or eliminated.

A Fresh Approach to WHAM

Establishing the Strategic Context

Acceptance of the need for transformation and avoiding status quo has to be the strategic context for a WHAM campaign in Kashmir. After taking the first step, it would be possible to place basic issues in perspective. While it is generally accepted that the Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja

Hari Singh is a legal document, it must be remembered that it also included the decision of the future of the state, based on the will of all the people of the state and not just Kashmir.³⁷ Here, the “state” includes the undivided regions of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Northern Areas. Implementation of the will of the people under the given circumstances is normatively as well as geographically contentious, given the territorial division of the erstwhile state into three parts of India, Pakistan and territory ceded by the latter to China.³⁸

This may require working towards a new approach, which may go beyond the stipulations of the Instrument, thereby highlighting the litigious nature of political negotiations for resolution. The choice remains between force of arms or dialogue. The latter is naturally more preferable and should, therefore, assume priority. This would provide the context for negotiated settlement rather than the armed one being espoused by Pakistan through its militant proxies. These negotiations would not be time determinant, and therefore, freezing the issue till normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan as has been the case of the boundary problem between India and China, is one aspect which will need active consideration.

A related facet is the highly fractious and divisive legacy of the Partition. Independent analysts such as Sumantra Bose and Victoria Schofield, who have reviewed the Kashmir issue in detail, accept this position.³⁹ Victoria Schofield also emphasises inequities of the Radcliffe Award where Sir Cyril Radcliffe arrived for the first time in India only on 8 July 1947 and proceeded to make a judgement within a couple of months, leading to many inequitable issues.⁴⁰ The emphasis, therefore, has to be on a new beginning or “Naya Kashmir” as the former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had espoused. This message remained unheard due to the compulsions of coalition politics of the then state government. It is essential to invoke this subtly to break the linkages with history and make a new start.

At the highest level, the government has to demonstrate a genuine concern for dialogue, peace and harmony. Genuineness will be evident only if there is stated indication of accepting the result that emerges through such a process, whatever it may be. That this may require acceptance of Kashmir as a disputed issue, which needs resolution through a tripartite dialogue is *sine qua non*, and thus, a larger debate for this position remains

contested. However, such a dialogue will create a favourable impression on the Kashmiri psyche of the state, attempting to reach out to the people, rather than continually questioning their loyalty towards it.

The government should, however, be confident of a favourable outcome given that India's handling of problems in Kashmir has been extremely temperate and responsible. There are no accusations of genocide or ethnic cleansing, unique for one of the few incidents in global history of a conflict primarily based on identity.⁴¹ The state should have more confidence in the outcome of any public opinion campaign in the Valley conducted at a time when charged emotions are not ruling the masses as during the Amarnath agitation.

With regionalisation of politics, there is an omnipresent danger of regional parties upping the ante to create "parochial obsessions and short horizons".⁴² Under the circumstances, it is essential to draw red lines in the politics of regionalism and separatism, by building consensus in national parties on such issues. Thus, a set of common issues with Kashmir on the topmost priority need to be taken up between the two or three national coalitions – the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), the United National Progressive Alliance (UNPA) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) – and consensus built to identify the boundaries within which each player will operate or allow its regional ally to do so.

Such boundary management can avoid confrontation which is against nationalist sentiment as was indicated by resolution of the SASS agitation in Jammu. Suman K Jha, writing in *The Indian Express*, has highlighted how the two main national parties, the BJP and the Congress, built up consensus on resolution through interaction at the highest level between the Presidents of both parties, Rajnath Singh and Sonia Gandhi, respectively.⁴³

Moreover, there has to be an innovative and flexible approach by the state administration. The economic blockade or its perception in July 2008 became a major point of contention, leading to the cry "March to Muzzafarabad". This created a sense of "suffocation" in the people in the Valley.⁴⁴ This could have been easily avoided by flying in supplies to the Valley, particularly medicines, and flying out apples on no-cost basis, which would have effectively taken out the steam from the agitation. It is such innovative measures that can beat the tempo of dissension.

The Aim of WHAM

We are living in an age of globalisation. The aim of WHAM should be to merge identities without loss of distinctiveness, rather than maintaining exclusivity. A balance has to be evolved to build a collaborative regional and national identity by fostering ideas within Kashmir, by supporting leaders with a legacy for a holistic identity and by creating corresponding institutions and linkages. Moreover, nation-building through geographic and population coagulation is not unique to Kashmir, but applies across the board to other states.

The roots of mutually supportive state and national identities have to be examined in detail. These could vary from legitimacy of accession, secular leanings of the people with the Indian Constitution, pan-cultural linkages and so on. Linking *Kashmiriyat* with the national identity could be one option. On the other hand, *Kashmiriyat* with its pan-secular appeal can be utilised to counter fundamentalist identities. A fine balance would thus have to be evolved between the two.

People-Oriented Strategy and Operations

As has been rightly propounded in various doctrines by the army, a WHAM campaign has to be the central feature around which the operational campaign would be based. This will not be a constraint on operational planning, but a basic consideration for implementation.⁴⁵ WHAM should be an operational strategy rather than a civic action addendum. The overall aim of a counter-militancy campaign will thus be to provide people with the right to live a normal existence without being subjected to the vagaries of militancy, population control measures, physical abuse such as body and vehicle searches and so on.

The army has identified the mandate of “instil confidence in the minds of the Kashmiris and wean youth away from the patronage of fundamentalist *jihadi* organisation” as central to its Doctrine and the route of development of infrastructure as a part of the same.⁴⁶ The human rights policy of the army is indicated as that of zero tolerance, transparency and strict punishment.⁴⁷ A similar policy has been indicated by the Chief of the Army Staff Gen Deepak Kapoor thus, “Upholding Human Rights is one of the cornerstones of our anti-terrorist operations and our record is worth emulating.”⁴⁸

Reducing the presence of the terrorist in terms of qualitative and quantitative impingement on the lives of the common people would, therefore, be of considerable importance. Thus, actions taken to restrain insurgents by security forces are seen to be more effective in obtaining support of the population than attempting to persuade the people to support the government.⁴⁹ This presence has to be reduced by neutralising numbers and, at the same time, by adopting tactics which avoid collateral damage, thereby avoiding a sense of discrimination. This is the essence of the people-friendly operations and public information and perception management concept espoused by the sub-conventional operations doctrine.

The tools of the insurgent and the counter-insurgent frequently appear to be the same. These are seen to be coercion, repression, intimidation and fear.⁵⁰ By constantly subjecting the people to controls, checks, frisking and midnight search and raids, the state authorities can generate a fear psychosis which replicates, in some measure, tactics employed by a terrorist. Many human rights activists term counter-terrorism as state terrorism. Human rights will thus have to be the focus of counter-insurgency strategy in the state. A holistic understanding of human rights in the armed forces is necessary, some of which would fall in the purview of the state administration such as succour to families of persons declared missing or disappeared, widows and orphans who are direct and indirect victims of insurgency, including actions by militants and not just by security forces.

Security is the primary focus of forces deployed for CI operations. The present model of security envisages what is popularly known as, “iron fist in velvet gloves” approach where maximum operations are launched based on accurate intelligence. The army doctrine even envisages that operational gains could be sacrificed, in case the people are likely to be inconvenienced, which is a laudable approach. “Violation of Human Rights, therefore, must be avoided under all circumstances, even at the cost of operational success.”⁵¹

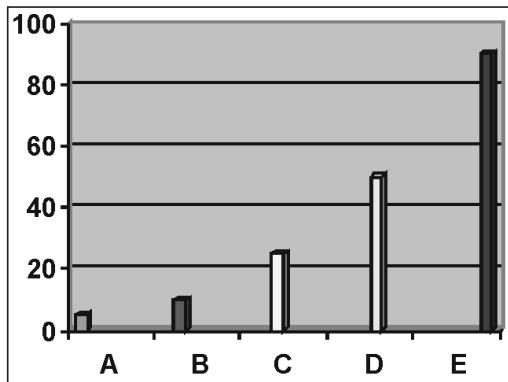
Progressive scaling of controls based on the level of militancy in an area is important. The sub-conventional operations doctrine of ARTRAC has given five scenarios which indicate level of violence and popular support:

- Low Violence, Low Base
- Low Violence, Large Base
- Mid Violence, Mid Base

- High Violence, Low Base
- High Violence, High Base or a civil war.

The situation in Kashmir over the years has passed through all these stages, except for the final, that is, civil war. Restriction on rights has to be varied for each scenario. Flexibility is essential in application of controls such as searches, restrictions on movements of civilians and frisking. A suggested model is indicated as per Figure 2 below. It would be evident that on a scale of 0 to 100, it is only the last stage of a civil war where over 90 percent controls have to be applied, in all other situations, restrictions may be 50 percent or below, based on the popular support and the level of violence.

Figure 2: Suggested Model for Scaling Controls



People in constant fear of violation of their privacy, honour and dignity by militants would not resist operations by the security forces to rid the scourge of criminal violations undertaken by terrorist groups. In a different period, however, when there is limited encroachment on their privacy by militants, they would resist attempts by security forces to impose order by force. Different gradation to individuals as well as groups and villages from an area which is discreet, to avoid a terrorist backlash, can be undertaken based on their anti people or anti-state activities in the past, rather than employing a standard strategy of controls to the population at large. This would, no doubt, provide the terrorists some opportunity to carry out strikes by subverting or coercing individuals, who have been classified as “white”, but this risk would have to be accepted.

Establishing equity between civil society and security forces is also important. A case in point is the drill at one point of time in Kashmir, where the convoys of security forces were given priority in movement on roads. These were generally led by a vehicle with a soldier along with a whistle and a long wooden stick, who would blow his whistle and crack the stick on any passing vehicle which did not give way. This was known as the “*lathi and seeti*” (stick and whistle) drill colloquially and caused widespread inconvenience to the people, until one of the corps commanders put a stop to this practice, much to the relief of the masses.

Hearts and Minds at the Grassroots

Insurgency, and consequently, counter-insurgency, is a means of strategic communication. Thus, a tactical action can reverberate at the state and the national level. It is, therefore, important that counter-insurgents operating at the grass roots must be imbued with a sentiment of sympathy and empathy for the people of the Valley. Hearts and minds must start from the “hearts and minds” of the counter-insurgent who should imbibe the human approach.

A critical issue is that of educating soldiers on the importance of winning hearts and minds. Unit and regimental loyalties and *izzat* naturally dominate the highly peer-oriented ethos of the armed forces. This is the prime mover of professionalism. To evoke this atmosphere, a humane approach towards the people, concomitant with the hard attitude towards the terrorist, in every commander and soldier or policeman, is a challenge. This will pose an eternal dilemma to the soldier, who frequently has to make a split-second judgement to return fire, which may lead to consequences which are unpredictable. Thus, proper education and training of soldiers assumes importance. While training will take care of the operational efficiency, education would build respect for human values.

While soldiers should not be encouraged to discuss the same with the civil gentry, or politely avoiding it, they have to be well-informed. There is considerable misinformation in this sphere, which causes confusion and weakens the position of the state by loss of credibility, with different people giving varied versions. At the level of the soldiers, however, understanding the overall paradigm under which India is claiming rights on Kashmir through the Instrument of Accession, and electoral participation over the years,

illegality of the option of force by Pakistan to include 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999, are some of the issues which are important in the discourse

The soldiers should retain this positive image of Kashmir, which, given the daily militant and separatist propaganda, would be difficult to sustain. This would be particularly important in the case of the central police forces, which are subjected to this much more than the army, as they are located in the centre of hot spots such as Maisuma, Safa Kadal or Degree College, Sopore, through provocative sloganeering by a small section of the more vocal population.

Troops must be enthused to work towards the cause of merging Kashmiri identity with the national identity through a humane rather than a coercive approach. Psychological conditioning of troops operating in the Valley prior to induction is, therefore, important so that restrictive impositions are minimised.

Rotation of troops in a CI area such as Kashmir is important. Moreover, it should also be ensured that there is sufficient gap before reinduction, preferably over five years. There has been a tendency in some soldiers, in the army in particular, to volunteer for service in Rashtriya Rifles (RR) on a second tenure, or immediately after tenure, with the unit in the Valley, due to financial incentives and to avoid the drudgery of routine in peace stations. There is a necessity to impose a minimum lay-off period, as such soldiers could well develop a rigid mechanistic approach of enforcing law and order, rather than the humane outlook desired in every soldier operating in the Valley.

Finally, every counter-insurgent has to speak the language, at least common terms, which are in daily usage; the vocabulary expands as the stay is extended. The counter-insurgents must understand local customs and traditions, the importance of *namaaz*, sanctity of Ramzan and so on.

The counter-insurgent leader operating independently, that is, at the company level must understand the politics of the area, what the local issues are, who the key opinion-makers are, what are their drivers and be able to apply these leverages either directly or through their superior authority appropriately. There is a danger of vested interests, which can be avoided by careful monitoring by the superior authorities regularly. The counter-insurgent at all stages must be prepared to sacrifice small gains for the larger

good in carrying out operations. This may require very fine judgement, which has to be developed during training and can be added on with initial experience, through insurgency lore and application of common sense. Here again, monitoring by superior authorities would be essential.

Reviewing the Chetwode Code

The people-centricity of the army is evident from the military code highlighted in the Indian Army doctrine. This emphasises the importance of a soldier as a citizen as “It must be emphasised that only a good citizen can become a good professional soldier. Having become a member of the armed forces, one must be an exemplary citizen.” This is particularly important in peace through the concept of “unlimited responsibility”, thus, “while unlimited responsibility is generally associated with service in war, it is also present in military service during peace.”⁵² This ethos will be invaluable while operating in Kashmir.

In the same vein, the Chetwode motto is the credo of every officer in the Indian Army. This is supplemented by emphasis on “Service Before Self” in inter-Services institutions as the National Defence Academy (NDA). The credo, though well known, is reiterated thus, “The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command, come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last always and every time,” and was given by Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode, during his address at the inauguration of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in 1932. The concept of “country” then was restricted to state and not the “people and the state”, which is a modern interpretation today.

The Chetwode faith is thus suitable for external conflict and an exterior enemy. With the Army primarily employed in intra-state wars and internal conflict, the need to connect with the people is important. The government and its instruments have to serve the people. The Chetwode credo could, thus, be reviewed to read, “The safety, honour and welfare of your country and its people come first always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last always and every time.” Such a review would provide a people-focus to the armed forces.

Integrating Civil Society Institutions and Youth

Common professional bodies, sports associations, bar councils and other institutions, which can link all parts of the state together in diverse forms are important. The Kashmir Bar Council and the Jammu Bar Council can operate independently, but there has to be an overarching state-level Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council, which should operate as one body, thereby representing the common voice of the state in an appropriate professional forum. Of particular importance is the Chamber of Commerce (CoC), with allegations of economic blockade breaking relations between the two regions. The State and the Central government need to actively work towards creating such associations in all professional spheres to build effective linkages nationwide. There has to be a coagulating body of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and projects undertaken under the Department for International Development (DFID) model. This larger perspective will win sizeable gains in the days ahead.

Holistic education is a powerful means for expression of a collaborative regional and national identity. There are many mediums which need to be employed for this purpose. For instance, music shows as Indian Idol with participation of Kashmiri youth, will have a powerful impact on generating a balanced mix. Increased intellectual interaction of Kashmiri teachers, scholars and students throughout the country is another facet. Such interaction should be held as much inside the state as outside it, to avoid the phenomenon of inversion, where holding such events inside the state by calling people from outside can be seen as another imposition from New Delhi.

Given the desire of the youth in J&K for higher education, and the limited number of seats in the colleges and universities there, providing quota in colleges in states which have surplus capacity such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and the southern states should be considered. At present, some states are providing reservation for seats in engineering colleges. On similar lines, accommodation in social and political science stream could be considered, for these courses will make a greater impact in building social fabric in the state.

Winning Hearts and Minds International Campaign

The campaign for WHAM in Kashmir is also situated in the international forum. An arbitrator of opinion internationally, and also, in turn, internally, is the Kashmiri diaspora abroad. As per Gen Arjun Ray, reducing the flow of

information from abroad is important to shrink propaganda.⁵³ The Kashmiri diaspora is divided into various segments, based on geographic divisions of the state. Diasporas generally tend to support secession, and the Kashmiri one is no different. Therefore, it is necessary to address Kashmiris living abroad through measures such as dialogue, seminars, talk shows and so on, for positive influence in the state. These, in turn, would shape international public opinion, including bodies which have been hostile from time to time such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Here again, it needs to be underlined that winning every argument is not as important as building the perception that the state is willing to listen to different voices of reason.

Communication in WHAM

Translating goodwill generated through actions of the forces on the ground requires effective use of information tools available for the message to reach the masses. Thus, the army doctrine states, "Psychological initiatives play a major role in a CI environment. The planned management of information and other measures are important to influence the opinion, emotions, attitude and behaviour of hostile, neutral or friendly groups in support of current policies and aims. Themes for psychological initiatives should be chosen objectively, taking into account the perceptions of the selected target audience." Targeting the strategic population is more important than the general population. This strategic population is generally very small but has a very large influence, even if it supports a limited cause.⁵⁴ This has to be the main focus of the strategic hearts and minds campaign planned at the highest level.

The interaction between the state and the people has to be based on core values, those of respect for human lives, rights and freedoms exercised without restraining the rights of others. The policy being conveyed or propagated has to be defensible and the message has to be conveyed through individuals who are non controversial and respectable.⁵⁵ Even the most adored authority, however, may not be able to convey a message which is potently false and unrealistic over an extended period, for as the proverb goes, it is not possible to fool all the people all the time.

The message has to be precise, and given large scale disaggregation, should be spread across media resources such as radio, television, newspapers, text messaging, blogs or focus groups, audio and video cassettes/CDs, movies,

television serials and even advertisements.⁵⁶ Avoiding contradiction between messages passed through different media is an emerging challenge for the WHAM communication campaign.

A simpler strategy for WHAM would be to let actions speak in place of words. This is also the focus of “civic action as WHAM strategy” followed by the armed forces. The primary beneficiary of this strategy has been the army as the people see it delivering the message. This can be suitably transposed to reflect the message of connecting with the Kashmiri people. Thus, the army goodwill schools or vocational centres named after various formations could be suitably named after respected national and apolitical figures. It may be better to name these schools as Dr S Radhakrishnan, or prominent secular leaders as Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, or renowned authors as Rabindranath Tagore, so as to build national identity in the schools, the effective operational running of which under the army needs to be lauded.

The primary role of the media in counter-insurgency is to delegitimise the insurgent, particularly the philosophy of violence in the name of revolution.⁵⁷ Devising a media campaign for this purpose is important. Generally, it is assumed that good intent automatically gets translated into effective publicity; the reality is farther from the truth. When the rebels are out to subvert the message and the media is downright hostile, great thought has to be given not just to actions being taken but also the message that is to be conveyed to the people.

This has to be done by experts in the field, who understand the nuances of people’s emotions, along with state authorities and security personnel, who operate in the area on a daily basis, to provide practical inputs. The campaign has to address the current concerns of the people and subtly link the same with the desired outcomes. A media campaign which goes against this dictum is unlikely to succeed, for the message will either fail to register with the audience or will be manipulated for subversive purposes.

The media is also bound to highlight unrestrained violence by the security forces, resulting in collateral damage. Since media is now a commercial enterprise rather than a profession, the influence of vested interests which are politically and commercially driven is considerable. In the Kashmir Valley, in particular, the media is known to be beholden to the militants, who seem to be dictating the agenda to a large number of media groups. The government, however, is not seen to be doing enough to reverse this trend.

A detailed analysis of the media has to be carried out. While this may be considered by many, and the media in particular, as a restriction on their freedom, a survey done by an impartial NGO or media watch-dog classifying media sources as per its inclination, its known supporters, and its financiers would be in the professional interest of our national conscience. Such a detailed survey will add to standing of the media in Kashmir and prevent accusations of bias. Those operating outside the spirit of their compact with the state have to be dealt with as per the laws of the land, rather than allowing them a free run on the minds of the masses as is being done presently. It is frequently seen in the Valley that even newspapers running seditious propaganda are obtaining free and subsidised newsprint and government advertisements, not to talk of being financed by dubious sources.

Media proliferation has also led to the ability of terrorist groups for cyber mobilisation, which had assumed major proportions during the Amarnath agitation, till the same was banned by the government. Some writers refer to this phenomenon as the new *levee' en masse*.⁵⁸ As an alternative to banning, a more appropriate strategy would have been to levy additional charges on text messaging through the mobile telephone companies for the purpose of unclogging networks. Thus, a text messaging tax would have effectively stemmed the tide and added to revenues for telephone companies. Such innovative strategies would produce better results than imposing restrictions.

Use of appropriate sources for passing the message is important. For this, a detailed audience survey and preparing a media reach map is essential so that different media can be used to target audiences in different geographic as well as economic and social segments. For instance, a message meant for the Bakarwal in Kupwara in North Kashmir, would not be effective through a television programme if the medium does not physically reach him. The radio could be ideal for this purpose.

It needs to be understood that the media is only the messenger. Thus, the dictum is restricted to "media is the most potent weapon for conducting psychological initiatives."⁵⁹ The media cannot help in covering operational failures or human rights violations. The emphasis should be on positive people friendly actions, which will be "lapped up" by a news-hungry media, where competing mediums are leading to an eternal drought of content.

Conclusion

The core lessons for running a hearts and minds campaign would be evident from a survey of implementation of the strategy in all its facets, from the national to the operational to grassroots soldiering in Kashmir. Whatever be the context, winning hearts and minds is a human issue as much as a national security issue, which would be evident from the case of Kashmir. A two-pronged WHAM strategy is thus called for. The first would involve a dialectic process of reaching out to the Kashmiri people. The second involves countering efforts to negate a WHAM strategy by proxy operatives. Each part of the strategy is as important as the other, as the success of one will be dependent on that of the other.

It is also common wisdom that people will support the winning side, or at least, one which gives them hopes of winning. This could perhaps explain the frequent mood swings of the people in Kashmir, which frequently baffle analysts. As the separatists raise protestations to a high decibel, the mood of the people swings away from the government, and once this cloud of euphoria bursts, they come to reassess priorities and seek options which maximise their individual good. Fear is another factor which results in rapid change in temperament. Thus, people are liable to give one version in front of the security forces, and another, in front of the terrorist, frequently opting to overcome the immediate danger.

Sustained policies which establish the genuineness of the government and non-coercive measures employed are, thus, important. The Indian state and security forces have created a bank of goodwill in the Valley; translating this into integration of the people in the national mainstream is the main purpose and intent of the WHAM campaign of tomorrow. Given the complexity of issues involved, and interests of varied parties, the process is a long drawn one. Yet a human-centric approach will facilitate success. While this paper tends to be prescriptive, the palliatives suggested should be applied after a careful analysis of each issue separately to other counter-insurgency scenarios, whether nationally, regionally and globally. Extrapolation and adaptation would be more in terms of the core principles, taking into account the differing ideological, aspirational human terrain and socio-economic factors obtained in each situation. Commitment to reduction of human losses and equity of rights is necessary, for no amount of media and perception management

can make up for collateral loss of lives in operations, either inadvertently or unintentionally. This, perhaps, would be the core lesson from Kashmir, adaptable to other environments as well.

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